



SEIUHealthcare®
United for Quality Care

March 9, 2023
Tamir Capeheart
PCA, Norwich
District 1199 New England
Before the Labor Committee

In Support of SB 1178: AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS

Good Afternoon Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez and members of the Committee. My name is Tamir Capeheart and I am a Personal Care Attendant in Norwich. I'm here today to ask you to support SB 1178 so that PCAs like me are able to take sick days off.

When we won our new Union contract last spring, it was our first-ever win for paid time off, 5 days per year for full-time workers. BUT almost a year later, the State of CT still hasn't implemented a system for this benefit.

The need of PTO is for when my child is sick or for appointments (school or medical). I have a child who has autism, and some appointments are not always available on the weekends. We don't get overtime because the state won't allow for it, so if I take a day off, I have to make a choice between buying meat or an activity for my child.

As we know children with his condition need added services like insurance and other things that Husky does not pay for as part of their coverage.

8 or 9 hours out of my paycheck is a choice between gas or a household necessity. Personally, I am a single mother with a child on the spectrum, who had to take off 2 years of work to get the proper services, caring for his wellbeing as I am his advocate.

I went 6 months without a car, not able to get child care for him as he is nonverbal. Another one of my demands or requests is sign language services, which are few or none in my area.

The Birth to Three program is only available ½ day at school, if at home it is 3-5 days 3 hours a day. He needed the 5 days on this program due to the seriousness of his autism. That was not convenient for me financially. I needed to work at least a full day or make enough money to pay bills, rent, buy food and keep the lights on.

I did not have a car at that time so that was an added burden to get the bus, hitch rides or carpool. And needed to be close to my family.

If we look at the pay; families are left to go to social services including myself. We won our new Union contract last spring, and we won the first-ever paid time off benefit, 5 days per year for full-time workers. BUT almost a year later, the State of CT hasn't yet implemented a system for this benefit. PTO is essential to the health, mental health and stability of my family's needs. No working family should have to make those choices. We don't deserve for others to raise our children, which takes away from our family growth.

And closing this statement we chose peaceful civil disobedience over being a rowdy crowd, which could lead to a lot of arrests and bodily harm. Inadvertently would damage our relationship with officers of the law and the people that need our services. We are the first choice for services, and we want to be the first choice when our personal business needs care as well.

We are human beings. We deserve better. Please support SB 1178 and ensure that home care workers are covered under Connecticut Paid Sick Day laws.

Thank you for your time.